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ABSTRACT

The 25 entries in this annotated bibliography deal with the art of handwriting and with current practices in the teaching of handwriting. Among the topics covered in the citations are: factors to consider in assessing readiness for formal handwriting instruction; the effects of teaching cursive writing to first grade children; achievement expectations and handwriting quality; the failure of schools to teach handwriting skills; reforms needed to combat educational weaknesses in the teaching of handwriting; types of illegibilities in the cursive handwriting of second and sixth grade students; the left handed writer; the process by which a child teaches himself or herself to write the letters of the alphabet; a handwriting approach that disregards slant; parents' and teachers' perceptions of handwriting; and an argument against the teaching of cursive script in the primary grades. (FL)

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AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LITERATURE DEALING WITH HANDWRITING INSTRUCTION AND EDUCATION

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Introduction

Handwriting serves as an important tool in the communication process. It allows man to utilize the written word for recording and transmitting thoughts. The emphasis of this basic communication skill is upon what a person writes. In viewing handwriting instruction, the emphasis is no longer upon what a person writes, but upon how. The skill a person possesses in handwriting does not influence the quality of ideas expressed. However, it is important that handwriting be developed to the point that it does not interfere with intelligent communication. The how and what of handwriting must be considered with equal importance in order to strengthen effective communication.

The purpose of this paper is to survey and investigate the art of handwriting in current literature. Readings on current practices in teaching are also viewed as an important resource in achieving handwriting competence.

Addy, Polly and Richard E. Wylie. "The Right Way To Write," Childhood Education. Vol. 49, No. 5 (Feb. 1973), pp. 253-254.

A study by the Committee on Later Childhood Education of the Association for Childhood Education International conducted in the fall of 1971 investigated the following four aspects of handwriting: nature of handwriting, extent of instruction, materials and evaluation.

Allen, Elizabeth G. and Jone P. Wright. "Ready To Write!" Elementary School Journal. Vol. 75, No. 7 (April 1975), pp. 430-435.

Describes factors that are important to consider in assessing readiness for formal handwriting instruction. The authors contend that children should not be rushed into handwriting without direct attention to readiness activities. A variety of activities were suggested to foster writing readiness.

Askov, Eunice, Wayne Otto and Warren Askov. "A Decade of Research in Handwriting: Progress and Prospect," Journal of Educational Research. Vol. 64, No. 3 (Nov. 1970), pp. 100-111.

This is a survey of both historic and current research and literature for the 1960-1970 decade.

Barbe, Walter B. and Virginia H. Lucas. "Instruction in Handwriting: A New Look," Childhood Education. Vol. 50, No. 4 (Winter 1974), pp. 207-209.

An assortment of issues and answers are presented dealing with handwriting instruction. The article deals with the importance and need of formal instruction based on a philosophy that is consistent with what is known about how children learn. A handwriting program taught by a multi-sensory approach is thought to be the best way for a child to become a successful writer.

Brown, Gerald R. "Handwriting: A State of the Art Research Paper," Resources In Education. (ED. 147-826), 53p. (Sept. 1977).

This is a basic review of available literature on handwriting. It includes eleven recommendations that were made to improve handwriting in one public' school systems language arts curriculum. A variety of topics concerning handwriting are discussed.

Chase, Clinton I. "The Impact of Achievement Expectations and Handwriting Quality on Scoring Essay Test," Journal of Educational Measurement. Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring 1979), pp. 39-42.

The purpose of the study was to see what the effect of an achievement expectancy would be on scores derived from essay tests where the quality of handwriting varied. The results showed clearly that scoring problems associated with handwriting quality are likely to be complicated by the expectation of the reader about the student whose paper is being read. This expectation may outweigh the impact of handwriting quality when essay tests are evaluated.

Early, George H., Don A. Nelson, David J. Kleber, Mark Treegoob, Everett Huffman and Connie Class. "Cursive Handwriting, Reading, and Spelling Achievement," Academic Therapy. Vol. 12, No. 1 (Fall 1976), pp. 67-74.

The effects of teaching cursive writing to first grade children was studied in two first grade classrooms in southern Indiana. The study reported that use of cursive writing did not adversely affect a child's reading or spelling performance. Fewer reversals resulted when comparing the experimental group (using cursive) to the control group (using manuscript). Cursive writing reduced problems in directionality for children.

Ediger, Marlow. "The Pupil, The Teacher, And Handwriting," Reading Improvement. Vol. II, No. 1 (Spring 1974), pp. 62-64.

The article stresses that the psychology of learning must be carefully considered when teaching handwriting. Children must experience success in achieving handwriting goals. The learner must feel involved in pertinent and interesting learning activities. The teacher must provide for individual differences. A balance must exist among objectives of skills, understanding and attitudes in order for a child to understand his/her highest communicative potential.

Enstrom, E. A. "The Questions on Handwriting," Elementary School Journal. Vol. 69, No. 6 (March 1969), pp. 327-333.

The article suggests that a major problem in handwriting is the inadequate teaching of handwriting skills in schools today. The article addresses many questions on the theory and philosophy of handwriting but concludes answers can only be found when the instructional ability of those who teach handwriting improves.

Enstrom, E. A. "Myths About Manuscript Writing," Education. Vol. 90, No. 1 (Fall 1969), pp. 51-55.

The author disputes arguments supporting the teaching of manuscript handwriting exclusively. The opinion expressed reflects the attitude that manuscript writing should be taught in the first two grades and then a change-over to cursive should occur.

Enstrom, E. A. "Handwriting: A Sorry Plight," Contemporary Education. Vol. 41, No. 3 (Winter 1970), pp. 133-136.

The article suggests a series of reforms needed in the classroom to combat educational weaknesses in the teaching of handwriting. Strong positive programs that include thoroughly researched materials and in-service programs for teachers will aid in eliminating the sorry plight of handwriting.

Froese, Victor. "Understanding Writing," Language Arts. Vol. 55, No. 7 (Oct. 1978), pp. 811-815.

The author proposes four stages in writing compositions. These stages are writing readiness, dictation, independent writing and language experimentation. Writing readiness is the handwriting component. Skills of spatial orientation and literacy vocabulary develop at this time. Children at the readiness stage should have an opportunity to experience a variety of materials in order to improve the handwriting skill.

Hardison, Margaret J. "Communication via Chalkboard and on Paper," Resources In Education. (ED. 100-856), 7p.

The article details a teaching unit developed for teacher interns to enhance an understanding of his/her role as a communicator of the written word. The unit contains objectives for teaching handwriting, methodology of manuscript writing and the practice of teaching manuscript writing before a peer group.

Horton, Lowell. "Illegibilities in the Cursive Handwriting of Sixth-Graders," Elementary School Journal. Vol. 70, No. 8 (May 1970), pp. 446-450.

The purpose of the study was to determine the types of illegibilities found in the cursive handwriting of a selected group of sixth graders. The study compared illegibilities in the handwriting of boys and girls and left-handed and right-handed students. The study found some consistency in the letters the sixth graders found difficult to form.

Horton, Lowell. "An Analysis of Illegibilities in the Manuscript Handwriting of Selected Second Grade Pupils," Illinois School Research. Vol. 8, No. 3 (Spring 1972), pp. 27-30.

The study included handwriting examples from 312 second grade pupils enrolled in twelve classrooms in Northern Illinois. The purpose of the study was to determine the types of illegibilities found in manuscript handwriting of the selected group of second graders. The study suggested that there is some consistency in the letters second graders find difficult to form in a legible manner.

Horton, Lowell. "Print Script Handwriting: The Innovation That Endured," Contemporary Education. Vol. 43, No. 5 (April 1972), pp. 284-286.

The article presents a variety of reasons for the success of manuscript handwriting as an enduring practice in the classrooms of this country. It stresses that manuscript handwriting is one of the few educational innovations to appear and remain in the American classroom.

Howell, Helen. "Write On, You Sinistrals!" Language Arts. Vol. 55, No. 7 (Oct. 1978), pp. 852-856.

A review of research dealing with the left-handed writer. A general consensus, from the limited research, points out that the left-handed child requires special instruction. A few suggestions are given for helping the left-handed writer.

McCarthy, Lenore. "A Child Learns the Alphabet," Visible Language. Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer 1977), pp. 271-284.

The study describes the process in which a young child teaches herself to write the letters of the alphabet. The letters she chose to learn are classified into categories depending on distinct features: circles, straight lines, lines and loops, and angles. This study examined four stages of progression that the child experienced before she was able to recall the form of a letter. Implications for further research and a variety of possible teaching methods are recommended.

Mustachi, Leila. "Hassle-Free Handwriting," Instructor. Vol. 88, No. 2 (Sept. 1978), pp. 100-101.

The author describes a handwriting approach that disregards slant. The teaching of this technique adheres to three rules: write straight up and down, write slowly and draw each letter. The overall intention is to build visible communicative success.

Paterson Board of Education. "Dale Avenue School Early Childhood Education Center Project," Resources In Education. (ED. 089-504), 26p. (June 1973).

The article reports the results of a study of handwriting skills of first, second and third grade students who were part of an urban early childhood education project for the culturally disadvantaged children in New Jersey. The writing performances, of the children, compared favorably with expectations following instruction based on 24 objectives.

Plattor, Emma E. and Ellsworth S. Woestehoff. "Toward a Singular Style of Instruction in Handwriting," Elementary English. Vol. 48, No. 8 (Dec. 1971), pp. 1009-1011.

This article supports the teaching of manuscript writing in the primary grades and continuing with manuscript throughout a child's schooling. The article challenges the claims that speed and style of cursive writing are superior to manuscript writing.

Sloan, Charles A. and Dewayne Triplett. "Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of Handwriting," Resources In Education. (ED. 155-723), 12p. (1977).

A study dealing with educators' and parents' attitudes toward handwriting education. Results of the study are included. The results were compared to a similar 1966 study.

Supple, Ginny. "Development of Beginning Handwriting Instruction: Level One," Resources In Education. (ED. 108-227), 52p. (Sept. 1972).

This report describes the 1970-71 developmental instruction for handwriting designed by the Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. The program was designed to promote beginning manuscript printing skills. A variety of materials were utilized and organized into five six-week teaching units. The program was found to be highly effective in developing appropriate letter formations and in providing students with a positive attitude toward education.

Wensel, Evelyn. "Research Summary: Basic Skills in Handwriting and Spelling," Resources In Education. (ED. 140-271), 13p. (May 1977).

Research in handwriting related to building skills deals with two major controversies: manuscript vs. cursive and legibility. Research was shown to indicate, for some students, a shift from cursive back to manuscript should be encouraged beyond sixth grade, at which time a personal style deviates from the standard form. Researchers have failed to find agreement on which factors affect legibility.

Western, Richard D. "The Case Against Cursive Script," Elementary School Journal. Vol. 78, No. 1 (Sept. 1977), pp. 1-3.

The author expresses his opinions on cursive handwriting. He feels that the total amount of time spent on cursive handwriting could be used for a variety of other experiences. He states that cursive script is not faster than printing and cursive script legibility does not compare to printing.

Summary

The ability to communicate effectively with written symbols is a factor in the academic achievement of a student in today's educational structure. Many people with exceptional verbal communicative abilities are unable to communicate adequately on paper due to deficiencies in their handwriting abilities.

Handwriting is a very personal skill. A student must have a positive attitude concerning his/her ability in order to be a successful handwriter. Many times the world views us through our skill of representing the symbols of communication.

A student must be motivated in order to achieve handwriting competence. Instruction must provide each student not only with the skills needed, but an interest, purpose and need to further their skills.

Readiness is as important to handwriting as it is to reading. Children must be provided with a variety of materials, early in their learning development, in order to become skillful handwriters.

It is imperative that teachers become skilled in the techniques of handwriting. A teacher must understand the purposes in order to allocate time to instruction, practice, diagnosis and reteaching of necessary handwriting skills. Special attention must be given to students with left-handed

dominance as well as special learning disabilities.

Research notes the great debate concerning manuscript vs. cursive writing still remains a heated issue. Researchers found no conclusive evidence that would support a change from the traditional approach of using manuscript in the primary grades and a transition to cursive occuring approximately in grade three.

The overall objectives of all research studied was to provide each student with an individual and personal tool with which to communicate effectively.